



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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COUNTY CONFIRMS HANTAVIRUS IN LOCAL WILD MOUSE

Vector Control Tests Wild Harvest Mouse from Los Penasquitos Canyon

County Vector Control officials confirmed today that a wild mouse trapped during routine monitoring in the Los Penasquitos Canyon Preserve has tested positive for Hantavirus.

"These findings are not surprising because at least 5 to 10 percent of the local wild mouse population tests positive for Hantavirus each year," said Gary Erbeck, Director of the County Department of Environmental Health. "Routine testing of wild mice is done to detect this rare, but sometimes fatal disease."

Vector Control staff will conduct more testing in the area to determine the extent of the virus. Hantavirus is carried by wild rodents, primarily deer mice. The virus is found in rodent droppings and urine and can be inhaled by humans when it becomes airborne. The airborne virus can cause Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS), which can begin with symptoms similar to the flu, but in rare cases, can lead to severe breathing difficulties and even death. There is no vaccine or specific treatment for Hantavirus.

Several precautions should be taken to avoid exposure:

- Eliminate rodent infestations immediately.
- Avoid rodent infested areas and do not stir up dust or materials that may be contaminated with rodent droppings and urine.
- Clean up rodent droppings and urine using the wet cleaning method described below.

Do not sweep or vacuum. Instead, use wet cleaning methods:

- Ventilate affected area by opening doors and windows for several hours.
- Use rubber gloves. Spray a 10 percent bleach solution (2 tablespoons bleach to 1 cup of water) onto dead rodents, rodent droppings, nests, contaminated traps, and surrounding areas and let the disinfectant stand for at least 15 minutes before cleaning. Clean with a sponge or a mop.
- Place disinfected rodents and debris into two plastic bags, seal them and discard in the trash.
- Wash gloves in a bleach solution, then soap and water, and dispose of them using the same double-bag method. Thoroughly wash your bare hands with soap and water.
- For more information, contact the County Department of Environmental Health at (858) 694-2888 or visit www.sdvector.com. ###

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